

I. I continue to request complete transparency about faculty salaries for the years since 2008, i.e., the adoption at HKUST of the professional practices of a public university.[1]

II. The academic years 2019/20 and 2020/21 were unusual, beyond the life-changing political events in Hong Kong.

(a) In spring 2020 details of the “HKUST Guangzhou campus” transpire, tearing me away from my research (left incomplete) to write a lengthy critique.[2]

(b) Much of summer/fall 2020 was sacrificed to writing a General Research Fund grant application in order to avoid the restrictions on research otherwise imposed by HKUST management.[3] I subsequently elaborated on further, recent management issues[4] and documented my insights into HKUST management practices from the past 15 years.[5]

(c) Spring 2021 has been consumed by updating and transforming my Chinese economy lectures into powerpoint format and by adapting the course to Zoom (and by being my own teaching assistant for exceptional reasons unrelated to me).

Digging deep into a research topic, undisturbed, becomes impossible in the face of HKUST management’s actions and a pandemic.

III. It continues to be the case that I am being paid the salary of an HKUST Assistant Professor (or less), while being confronted with an approximately 60% under-funded HKUST pension fund and no housing allowance. The details are well documented.[6]

As I have now done for several years, in vain, I ask you to explain how you expect a professor to live under the specific financial conditions that you impose. If you can’t square the circle, you can’t expect me to be able to square the circle.

[1] On how the current “merit review” grossly ignores faculty views and professional practices see [https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/Initiative/2015-11-9-MeritReviewGuidelines\\_FullVersion.pdf](https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/Initiative/2015-11-9-MeritReviewGuidelines_FullVersion.pdf)

[2] <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/CarstenHolz-CritiqueHKUST-GZcampus-25Jun2020.pdf>

[3] <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/Initiative/2019-11-26-ResearchInactive.pdf> and item C of <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/ReflectionsOnProvostComments-SOSCmeeting7Dec2020.pdf>

[4] <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/ReflectionsOnProvostComments-SOSCmeeting7Dec2020.pdf>

[5] <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/Initiative.html>

[6] <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/FakeMeritReview.html> with specifically the retirement issue at <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/FakeMeritReview2019/CarstenHolz-HKUST-RetirementFunding-inclRateOfReturn-29Apr2019.pdf> and the housing issue at <https://carstenholz.people.ust.hk/FakeMeritReview2019/CarstenHolz%20HFA.pdf>

## Appendix: A couple of interesting points about my salary / salary history

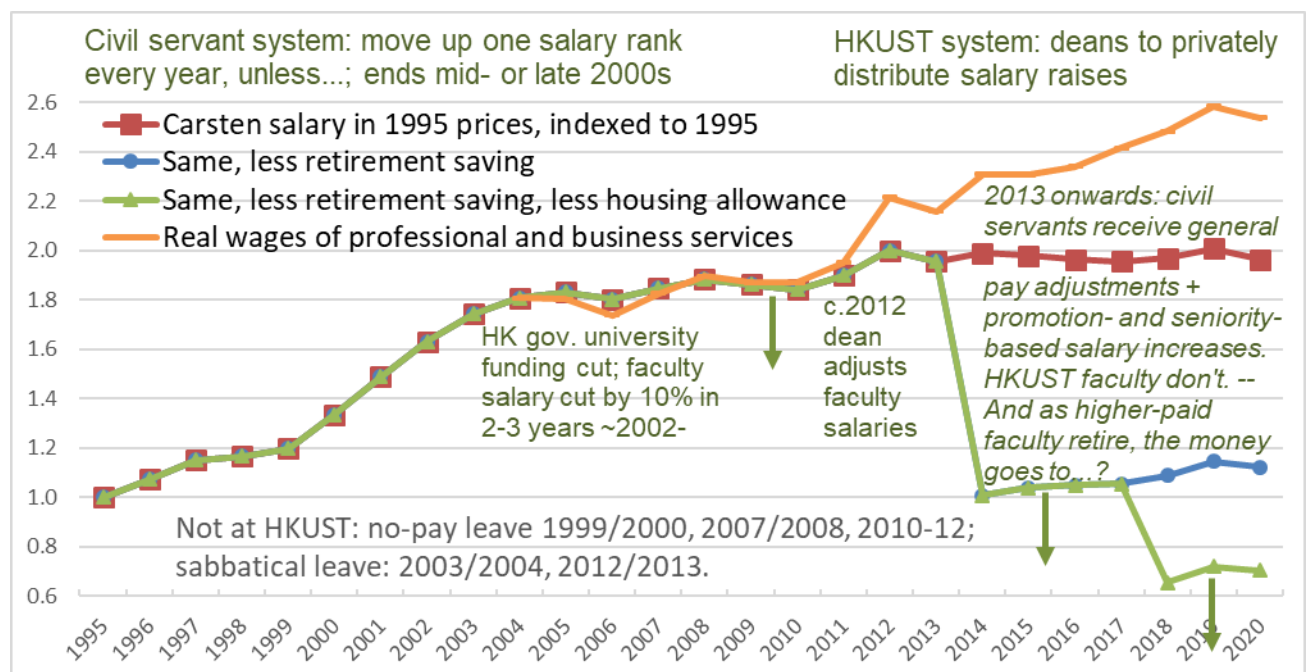
(a) HKUST’s “2019-2010 Financial Statements” (p. 21) in a table titled “Remuneration of Higher Paid Staff” lists salary brackets with the number of employees.[7] In 2020, the table covers 386 “staff” (who I take to be a subset of the 490 faculty),[8] every single one of whom has a higher remuneration (as defined in a note below the table) than I do. That puts me in the bottom 21% or even lower (the table does not extend further down), as full professor (with a decent publication / citation record) and after 26 years of employment at HKUST.

[7] <https://fo.ust.hk/financial-information/financial-statements>

[8] Faculty number provided by Provost Lionel Ni at Social Science Division meeting, fall 2020.

(b) My salary (in real terms) has been flat since 2004, while the average wage of professional and business service employees in Hong Kong has risen significantly (see chart below).

The three expenses taxes, rent, and supplementary retirement saving—around age 50 one becomes conscious of HKUST’s severely under-funded pension arrangements and the urgent need to act—together more than exhaust my salary.



**Real wages of professional and business services:** The closest relevant Hong Kong wage series that I could find is the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department’s Table 19 “Nominal Wage Indices for employees up to supervisory level (excluding managerial and professional employees) by selected industry section” ([https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/web\\_table.html?id=19](https://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/web_table.html?id=19)). I linked this series to my salary index at the series’ start date of 2004 and, going forward, adjusted it by the CPI.

**Housing:** From 2002 through June 2018, I received a “home financing” (housing) allowance. After June 2018, the line “... less housing allowance” in the chart subtracts that amount from my salary (out of which it would now have to come). The housing allowance has always been, and increasingly by far, insufficient to pay the rent, as indicated by the downward arrows. In 1995- 2002, HKUST provided an apartment, for the first years off campus, against 7.5% of my salary.

**Notes:** A 15% tax on a salary of “2” equals 0.3, and a salary of “1” stands for my extremely low entry-level salary at the bottom of the HKUST pay scale at the time.